

Budget Work Session

Agenda Item #	5
Meeting Date	May 22, 2006
Prepared By	Barbara B. Matthews City Manager
Approved By	

Discussion Item	Funding for Safe Takoma Initiative
Background	<p>On September 13, 2004, the City Council held a work session to discuss cross-jurisdictional crime prevention along the border between the City of Takoma Park and the District of Columbia. The residential streets surrounding the Takoma Metro Station serve as main thoroughfares for pedestrian traffic utilizing the Metro.</p> <p>Neighborhoods in close proximity to the Metro have not been immune to criminals who seek victims to rob. Typically, once a crime trend has been identified, an increase in police presence occurs; this presence occurs in the form of overt and covert operations, often involving multiple law enforcement agencies.</p> <p>Sustained levels of cooperation between various governmental agencies operating in this area could serve as a long-term solution to address a variety of crimes, including robbery and drug sales/possession, as well as other quality of life issues. The CSAFE model has been in place in the International Corridor for several years and has been quite successful in bringing together government representatives from three different governments, as well as the people who live and work in that area. Chief Cindy Creamer has suggested that the City consider replication of the CSAFE model in the area along the District of Columbia border in an effort to improve the quality of life for the people who live, work, and visit the City.</p> <p>The City Council discussed the replication of the CSAFE model during the FY06 budget process. Because no program partner had been identified or had pledged funding at that time, funding was not included in the City's FY06 budget. However, the City Council agreed to commit \$25,000 towards the initiative once a program partner had been identified.</p> <p>In 2006, residents of both Takoma Park and the District of Columbia have met to discuss the replication of the CSAFE model (which they refer to as Safe Takoma) in the area along the border between the two jurisdictions. Councilmember Austin-Lane has proposed that the City include \$75,000 in the FY07 budget towards the annual cost of the initiative.</p>
Policy	<p>In accordance with Article VIII of the Charter of the City of Takoma Park, the City Manager is charged with submission of a proposed budget for consideration of the City Council. Before adoption of the budget, the City Council shall hold at least one public hearing. The public hearing was held on May 8th.</p> <p>The City Council is ultimately responsible for the development and adoption of the City's annual budget and the services to be provided by the City government.</p>

Fiscal Impact	<p>Chief Creamer previously provided a preliminary estimate of \$150,000 for the hiring of a Program Director and associated operational costs.</p> <p>Should the City Council decide to proceed with the Safe Takoma program, it should be recognized that the initiative would require a commitment of City resources above and beyond the direct financial outlay for the program's operational costs. Particularly in the start-up phase of the program, a considerable time commitment will be required of the Police Department management staff.</p>
Attachments	None
Recommendation	Staff recommends that the City Council discuss the Safe Takoma initiative and provide direction to staff regarding any funding to be included in the FY07 budget.
Special Consideration	<p>It was reported by Ms. Brooks at the May 1 Council Meeting that the Judiciary Committee of the District of Columbia has endorsed funding for the Safe Takoma initiative. The Council of the District of Columbia has yet to take final action on the proposed budget; the next vote will occur in June, after which the United States Congress will consider and approve the District of Columbia's proposed budget.</p> <p>The new fiscal year for the District of Columbia will begin on October 1, 2006. This is the earliest date that funding would be available.</p> <p>As noted above, a considerable time commitment will be required of the Police Department management staff. It should be noted that Chief Cindy Creamer plans to retire on or around July 1, 2006. It is anticipated that the recruitment for a new Police Chief will take several months to complete.</p> <p>To date, minimal City funds have been committed to the CSAFE program operating in the International Corridor, which has received State recognition for its work. The City's contribution consists of a portion of the City's annual CDBG allocation and in-kind contributions such as copier usage, etc. Because the existing CSAFE is primarily funded through one-year grants, the City has experienced difficulty in retaining program staff. It is strongly recommended that the City Council give priority consideration to ensuring the continued success of the existing CSAFE program by providing a more stable funding source.</p>